United Nations S/2001/470

Security Council

Distr.: General
10 May 2001

Original: English

Letter dated 8 May 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Angola to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the statement made by Jose Eduardo dos Santos, President of the Republic of Angola, at the opening of the Peace Conference held in Luanda on 2 May 2001 (see annex), and respectfully request that it be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Joaquim A. B. B. **Mangueira**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex to the letter dated 8 May 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Angola to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY JOSE EDUARDO DOS SANTOS PRESIDENT OF THE REPULIC OF ANGOLA AT THE OPENING OF THE PEACE CONFERENCE HELD IN LUANDA ON 2 MAY 2001

My Fellow Angolans,
Distinguished Guests,
Honourable Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The sponsors of this conference asked for an in-depth analysis of democracy in Angola. This event is a commendable and timely initiative, particularly given the fact that this audience consists of such outstanding members of the Angolan society, from different backgrounds and expertise in various areas of knowledge and science, with a wealth of accumulated experience.

I am sure that the findings of their study and reflection on the causes of the main and current problems in Angola will be useful to the leaders of our political parties and to the nation, as well as to the members of our civic associations, in addition to being a valuable contribution to the search for mutually agreed solutions.

Many of our problems are as old as Angola itself and they are very complex. Other problems, political in nature, date back from the time of the independence of our country but are equally intricate.

The former are related to the building of the Angolan nation and to the borders defined in the Berlim Conference of 1885 and by other agreements made among the colonial powers. Those problems are dealt with and solved in a systematic manner, based

on our country's basic law and on the widely accepted or at least consented principle "From Cabinda to Cunene, one sole people, one sole nation". The latter are the problems that this conference is going to discuss and they derive from a number of relationships of interconnected Angolan and foreign interests, in a web of schemes, mechanisms and instruments in which there are two kinds of players: the nationalists, that is the "patriots", who are conscious of their sacred duty to defend the African people and their interests, and those who serve as agents of neo-colonialism, and who are more concerned with their personal interests and fulfilling their ambitious.

The distinction between these two categories is clear from the attitude and the behavior that display toward our common history and heritage. The former are driven by positive action, the building of common assets and values, whereas the latter act under disguise because they only serve their masters well if they spread the confusion and chaos that allow the looting and pillage of the country's resources.

This is something that is happening across our continent. The concurrence of factors or the systematic way in which this activity is managed can lead us to conclude that it is the conservative high finance circles within the international community that exert control over the means to carry on most activities, either political, economic, financial, media-related and even military, in order to subdue those African patriotic elite groups that stand out in the economic and intellectual arenas in their efforts to preserve or to recover the economic and political influence they lost with the end of colonialism.

This is a trend that contradicts the march of history that brought independence to our countries and allowed for today's partnerships in business, based on mutual respect and the sharing of the benefits. Some of those connections are responsible for the scourge that our people have endured for so many years.

My country has been immersed in successive wars for the last 40 years which we can divide into three stages, all of them connected to each other by the common thread that the process for a total liberation of Angola that is still ongoing.

1. The national liberation war against the Portuguese colonialism, which ruled Angola for approximately 500 years, a war that lasted from 1951 to 1963 (14 years).

2. The war of aggression and the occupation of part of the national territory by the South African 'apartheid' regime army, from 1975 to 1988 (13 years).

3. The senseless civil war driven by a large-scale foreign interference process that started in 1988 and is still going on today.

For each of these stages, a corresponding political agreement was signed to put an end to the armed conflict.

1. The Alvor Agreement of 1974 created the conditions for the proclamation of the independence of Angola on 11 November 1975.

2. The New York Accords of December 1988 provided for the cessation of the war of aggression against Angola and the withdrawal of the South African forces to create the conditions for the independence of Namibia and the abolition of Apartheid.

3. The Bicesse Accords of 1991 reached after the failure of the Gbadolite Accords in 1989 and the Lusaka Protocol that concluded it. Those agreements were suppose to accomplish a cessation of the civil war and of all related foreign connections.

That did not happen and it is not difficult to understand the reasons why, if we look more closely at this question.

1. The schemes and instruments put into place during the cold war by the Western powers, in order to support the multiple UNITA activities, including the war, have not been all deactivated.

2. The United States only recognized the independence of Angola officially in 1993 and since then, there is still a very slow process of confidence-building developing between that government and the Angolan authorities.

3. 'Apartheid' has been abolished, but some of the connections that existed between Mr. Savimbi and his mentors have not ended.

4. Some French special sectors continue to act according to the plan of action followed by the late General Marenches,

who helped Savimbi organize his guerilla force in 1976, with the complicity of some African countries. Savimbi himself reveals this in his book.

Through such connections, one can exert political and diplomatic influence, engage in the traffic of diamonds to obtain revenue and buy illegal arms and equipment, foodstuffs and other logistic means to feed an unfair and inglorious war. For that reason, the United Nations imposed sanctions and every country, without exception, should do away with these obsolete schemes inherited from the cold war, and in this way contribute to peace.

My Fellow Angolans,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I know that my Government has been called presumptuous and arrogant in certain circles by members of some civic associations and they certainly deserve our consideration and respect. However, the complex problems of our internal relations and defense of our national interests, which are linked to the issue of sovereignty, cannot be solved neither in a casual nor in an emotional way.

In truth, when looking at the implementation of all these Accords by the signatory parties, anyone would agree that the good faith, the judiciousness and flexibility of the Angolan Government and of the MPLA could rarely be put into question.

The MPLA and the Angolan Government always endeavor to safeguard what they won and achieved from these Accords.

1. The MPLA proclaimed and preserved our national independence as a result of the Alvor Agreement.

2. It set up and protected our democratic institution created after the general elections held in accordance with the Bicesse Accords.

3. It preserved the Government of National Unity and Reconciliation, the Single National Army and the Integrated National Police, formed on the basis of the Lusaka Protocol.

Mr. Savimbi's UNITA, in turn, viewed all of the Accords that he signed as a tactical move designed to win time and strengthen his military capacity.

He blocked the implementation of an agreement whenever he felt reinvigorated and capable of launching a final assault to the state power through anti-democratic means. When trying to do this through his connections and outside support systems, he would always rely on his friends and allies from the Cold War time.

After he failed to comply with an agreement, he would start raising exponentially the level of the violence of his attacks, causing enormous destruction and other immeasurable damage to our nation.

Mr. Savimbi's radical stance in this respect leads me to conclude that a political compromise was never part of his own agenda.

On the other hand, the emphasis on the role of these outside factors in the continuation of the conflict is justified by the existence of a neo-colonialist design.

In the olden times, the patriots that opposed such design were considered to be agents of communism, terrorists and brigands. Today, they are branded as incompetent, gangsters, corrupt, autocrats, etc. What matters is that the people knew who defends them. They know that it is the MPLA that promotes economic and political in the plural sense, with a view to the building of a true democracy.

This stance is inspired by the new political and ideological culture that stems from its character documents. In fact, the MPLA was the driving force behind the reform not only of the political system but also of the economic and in part, at least so far, of the judicial system, and it also instituted and continues to develop a process of internal democratization. He is aware that the democratization of society and of the state must be accomplished by a democratic party. A non-democratic party that wants to be involved by taking on a task of this nature will not be able to survive.

To this conclusion, I might add that another deep-rooted cause of the armed conflict in Angola is the considerable slow pace in the democratization of UNITA.

UNITA, as a political party, has a place in our society and the legal status that it needs to carry on its normal activities as a party. It does not need to resort to illegal schemes to engage into politics.

It can hold conferences, congresses, seminars, practice proselytism, etc. like all the other parties, adapting to our time, because the cold war has ended and many of yesterday's enemies became today's partners.

My Fellow Angolans,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The word peace should be the most uttered word in our country today. I do not believe that there is one single Angolan who does not want to see his or her country in peace very soon.

Nevertheless, if we ask every person what could be the road leading to that peace, there would be several different answers.

In this matter, just as in any other issue, the Government states its position taking into account the will of the majority of the people, especially the opinion of the so-called "Deep Angola" people.

Some of those people from different corners of Angola wrote thousands of letters to the late Maitre Beye and to the Peace Process Joint Commission denouncing the flight of UNITA soldiers from the billets, and the smuggling of weapons to hiding places and alerted them to the risk that threatened their lives. Many of these same people became victims of military sieges of towns and villages, and the target of extreme and indiscriminate violence like the inhabitants of Cuito, Malange, and other communities.

In 1998, from these besieged places and other communities, members of the local traditional authorities "sobas", youths and even women asked for arms from the Armed Forces Chief of Staff and to the President of the Republic, in order to protect their lives and their property.

We had very few weapons. Our army, restricted by the peace agreements, was not doing any training or military maneuvers, and was not doing any maintenance operations with its equipment because the military personnel could not easily move from place to place.

On this side, no one was prepared for the war but the peace in which all of them had believed, gave place instead to a horrible nightmare.

Many international observers predicted the fall of our rule in a few months. That would signify the death of democracy and freedom, and the postponement of the realization of the dream of a new and prosperous Angola for all.

The people did not want us to lose what we had achieved. They chose to resist by fighting back. We got army volunteers from every province. Then, the war to end the cold war broke out, we fought in it not because we enjoyed it, but simply because somebody else initiated the onslaught on the established power by engaging in a total unrelentless war, which forced us to respond in order to enforce the peace accords and the laws of our Republic.

Those laws establish the rules of social integration and provide guidelines for their mutual relations as well as for the relations between political parties and the civic associations and the Government, based on the respect of the human being and his or her legitimate property and on the rejection of the use of violence against any individual or the State.

To conclude, applying the principle of "a war to end the war" was the means for legitimate defense adopted by the people and the State in the face of a recalcitrant aggressor's attacks, and it aimed at forcing him to embrace a fair and lasting solution for peace!

This is the stage in which we are presently, a stage in which democracy must be and improved ever more, as we are aware that without democracy, we will lack the minimal conditions for a peaceful settlement of this conflict. In fact, to dissipate forever the specter of war that has loomed on the horizon for the Angolan people, we need to respect the plurality of views and accept the regular polling of the people's opinion, in summary, use the electoral process as one of the legitimate forms of exercising power.

We also want to lay the foundation for a society and a culture of tolerance and merit, through an increasing and healthier competition in all aspects of life, in which we will see more of events like this one, as a forum to discuss and reflect on the paths for peace.

The Government also thinks that a lasting peace for Angola is not just a political issue but also a question of law. The right to peace for the Angolan people is provided for in our constitutional law. The Bicesse Peace Accords and the Lusaka Protocol were

included in our national legislation as approved by our National Assembly, and through the pertinent United Nations resolutions, the signatories of the Accords took on certain obligations before the international community.

From all that I said, it is clear that we do not condone war because we witness and feel in our body and soul its direct and indirect impact.

For that reason, the Government announced a Four-Point Agenda for Peace that reinforces our compliance with the Lusaka Protocol and our determination to hold general elections.

However, we have to point out a new fact. Mr. Savimbi, after a hiatus of six months, re-appeared and declared that he accepts the Lusaka Protocol. Now, we need him to tell us when is he going to stop making war and how does he intend to conclude the implementation of the Lusaka Protocol. In this way, we could open a speedy way to peace.

Finally, I hope that this initiative will also contribute to the search for peace with law and democracy in mind.

My best wishes for a successful conference!

Thank you.